

FINDING WORK

With the right skills and a willingness to shift fields, you could strike pay dirt right away

NEWS YOU CAN USE

Let's face it: Unemployment is still pretty high, and in some fields—technology, publishing, and investment banking—layoffs and closings have left plenty of walking wounded. “I think what makes this recession unique is the color of the collar,” says economist Paul Harrington of Northeastern University, noting that professionals have borne the brunt of the pain this time around. Yet those same professionals are often in the best shape to find other *good* jobs, especially if they are willing to switch fields. Dumped dot-commers can take their computer skills to the healthcare industry, for example, or former human resource managers, with retraining, can become educators. And even finance and technology are showing a bit of life in some key sectors.

The trick in this economy

is to match expertise to a job type, regardless of the field. “This labor market likes people with particular kinds of skills,” says Harrington, including computer, specialty healthcare, or teaching expertise. The good news: Once you find a fit, you’re likely to be in the money for a while. The first wave of baby boomers is set to start retiring, leading to a brain drain on the supply side even as demand soars in some fields. The best advice for job seekers? Look at the big demographic picture; those trends will create tomorrow’s jobs.

—Jodi Schneider

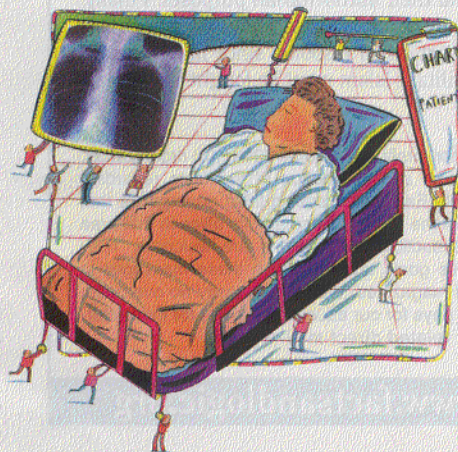
HEALTHCARE

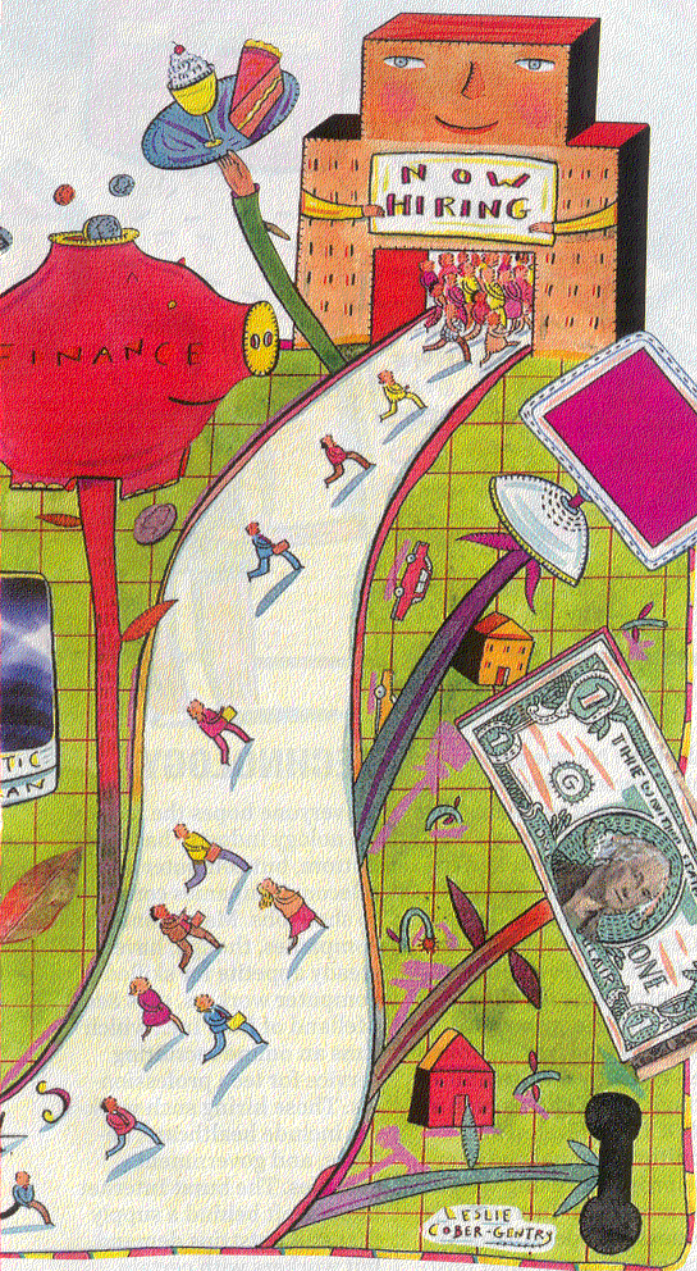
Need evidence that healthcare is hot? Just follow the money. Clinical laboratory scientists in California are being offered \$10,000 signing bonuses. Employees at Thomas Jefferson University Hospital in Philadelphia receive \$2,000 for each successful radiation therapist candidate they refer. And a pharmacist willing to move to International Falls, Minn. (population 10,000; the “Icebox of the Nation”), can earn \$100,000 base salary, plus a

bonus and profit sharing. And all of this is occurring as other industries freeze or cut salaries and lay off workers. Even once-out-of-favor medical specialists like cardiologists, orthopedic surgeons, and oncologists are sought after; their ranks thinned as HMOs emphasized primary care. “Now the pendulum has swung, and there’s a great shortage of specialists throughout the country,” says Susan Edson,

principal at New England Health Search, a physician recruitment firm in Maine. Demand is expected to only grow as an aging population requires more specialized treatment.

NOW HIRING: Specialty nurses. If you’re an experienced emergency room, intensive care unit, or critical care unit nurse, you can pretty much write your ticket, says Dirk Leidecker, vice president of operations at Martin,





Fletcher, a healthcare recruiting company in Texas. Registered nurses need an associate's or bachelor's degree in nursing or a diploma from a hospital-based program, and specialists receive on-the-job training and can be certified by the appropriate association. In some areas, hospitals are required to maintain a certain nurse-to-patient ratio in wards with the most critically ill patients. No wonder they're

offering \$15,000 signing bonuses. And there's no end in sight to this labor shortage: The government projects some 560,000 nursing positions will be added between 2000 and 2010. Perhaps average annual salaries of about \$50,000 (and climbing) will help fill some of those jobs.

FUTURE PROSPECTS: Medical technicians. Once, it was just the X-ray. Now there's a veritable alphabet soup of

technologically advanced medical imaging devices: CT, MRI, PET, plus ultrasound and mammography, and there are too few skilled workers to operate them. The average annual salary is around \$40,000. There are plenty of ways to get into the field, says the American Society of Radiologic Technologists, including two-year programs at hospitals or community colleges or four-year degree programs. And because the technology is changing so quickly, on-the-job training is essential.

—Katherine Hobson

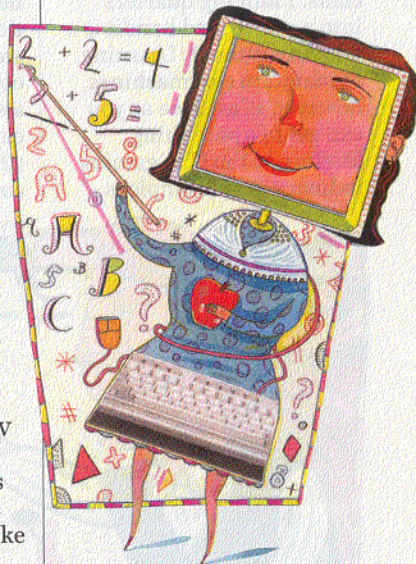
EDUCATION

The writing is on the blackboard: Educators are in demand. While state budget cuts have slowed hiring in a few areas, most school districts are actively searching for new teachers to keep up with booming enrollments, teacher retirements, and smaller class sizes. The Florida Department of Education, for example, estimates at least 16,000 new hires will be needed next year across the state. Special education, bilingual, math, and science teachers typically top districts' most-wanted lists. But like real-estate values, the job market for educators depends on location. High-growth areas like Las Vegas are turning to TV and bus stop ads to help land some 1,600 educators for next school year; at the same time, tony districts like those on Chicago's North Shore and in Westchester County, N.Y., usually receive a bundle of applications for every opening.

NOW HIRING: Librarians are the hot ticket, with a range of employers from rural elementary schools to top-notch research universities hunting for them. Last November, Cara McDaniel, 23, found her "dream job" as a

librarian at Hilton Head High School in South Carolina—weeks before she graduated from the University of South Carolina. Librarian jobs should be abundant for some time. The American Library Association reports that more than a quarter of all currently employed librarians will reach age 65 by 2009. These jobs require much more than a love of books. A master's degree in library science is necessary, and, increasingly, librarians must have up-to-date computer skills to manage online databases. First lady, and former librarian, Laura Bush announced last month that the president's 2004 budget will include \$20 million to recruit and train the next generation of librarians. None of the money, however, will go to increase salaries, which average about \$49,800 annually.

FUTURE PROSPECTS: The school CEO, the principal,



has one of the toughest jobs in education—and there will soon be a lot of openings at the top. Through 2010, the nation's schools will need 10 percent more principals as school enrollments mushroom, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics. And some 40 percent of principals will reach retire-

ment age over the next decade. Most schools require some teaching experience and at least a master's degree. According to the National Association of Secondary School Principals, annual pay is about \$83,000 for high school principals and about \$67,800 for assistant principals. —Ulrich Boser

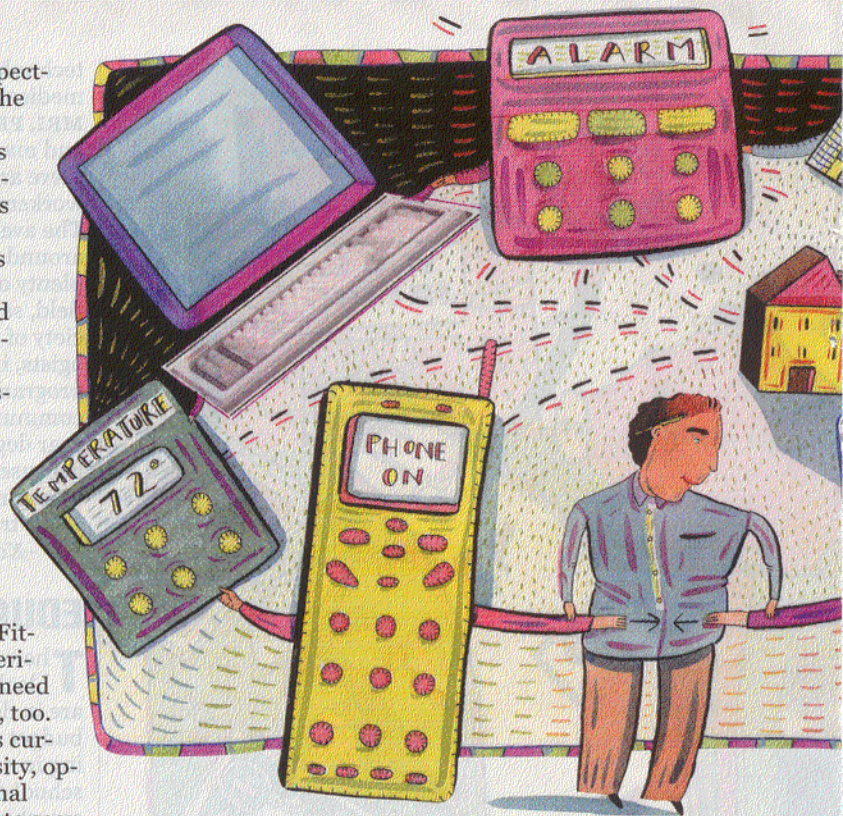
SERVICE

Those who *do* can find work. Those who *make* typically cannot. Productivity improvements at home and competition from overseas caused manufacturers to cut 700,000 jobs last year. But the service sector almost made up for it, expanding by 500,000 jobs. Growth, however, wasn't in areas like retail or restaurants but in helping others "do" something, like get fit, learn a skill, or gamble.

NOW HIRING: Slot technicians. Plunking quarters into a one-armed bandit is a poor investment. Learning to maintain slot machines, however, is as close as you can get to a sure thing. Staffing in the U.S. gaming industry, which employs

about 600,000, is expected to grow by about the same amount as revenue—5 percent—this year. The biggest winners will be slots, says Beth Deighan, president of Casinocareers.com. Casinos are adding machines, and several states are considering opening slot facilities to avoid raising taxes, she notes. After passing a three-month training course, slot techs start at \$11 an hour, though experienced techs can earn twice that.

FUTURE PROSPECTS: Fitness trainers. As Americans grow fatter, the need to get in shape grows, too. And with the nation's current epidemic of obesity, opportunities for personal trainers are expected to soar over the next decade. "Because people have greater health problems and motivation problems, they need someone to pull them off the couch," says Gregory Florez, a spokesman for the American Council on Exercise and CEO of FitAdvisor, a health coaching company in Salt



Lake City. No one group tracks personal trainers, though Florez estimates that today there are about 85,000 nationwide, and the field is projected to double in size over the next decade.

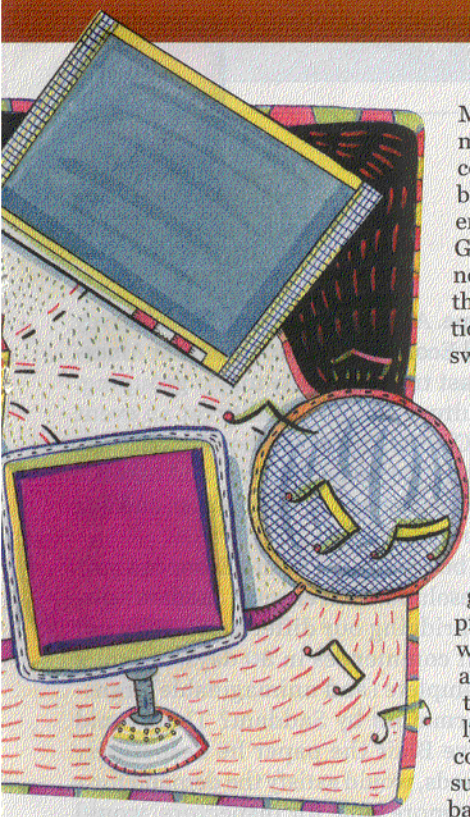
Certified personal trainers focus on developing fitness programs for clients. Many work in gyms with members who pay an hourly fee—typically \$40 to \$50, though it can run as high as \$100. They develop and monitor personalized exercise programs using weights and machines. Increasingly, trainers are specializing in such areas as pre- and post-rehabilitation, pre- and post-pregnancy, working with competitive athletes, and in specific sports. Annual salaries range from \$30,000 and up for gym trainers to more than \$100,000 for sole practitioners who specialize. Education varies widely, though better-paid trainers not only have great abs and pecs but a degree in exercise physiology or exercise science, or a related health field. —Kim Clark and J.S.

TECHNOLOGY

Everyone hopes the technology industry has hit bottom, but computer and telecom companies continue to shed jobs. Many nontech companies, though, have a steady appetite for skilled computer workers, says Scot Melland of Dice Inc., which runs an online recruiting service for tech professionals. Those hiring such workers include healthcare, defense, and government agencies. The burst Internet bubble left behind a supply that still outstrips demand, but workers with certain programming skills—in computer languages like C++ and Java—are needed. And they're often working on Web-related projects. "We're certainly not finished with the Internet," says Maria Schafer of market researcher Meta Group.

NOW HIRING: Network administrator/analyst. In hard times, companies can save money by improving links between computer systems from various makers and even eras, such as main-





frames with newer personal computers. The best job candidates know how systems work together or are certified in operating the hardware that provides the glue, such as Cisco networking gear. Internet cops—those with experience in tightening network security—are in special demand, particularly in the booming healthcare industry as it scrambles to meet new privacy regulations, says Dawn Neiffer with the recruiting firm of Hall Kinion & Associates. Other recruiters report the same for the secretive defense industry. A bachelor's degree is usually necessary. Administrators typically earn \$46,000 to \$77,000 a year, while analysts make \$42,000 to \$95,000 a year.

FUTURE PROSPECTS: Database manager/analyst/developer. They're in demand now, and are likely to be for many years to come, as companies and government agencies gather a huge amount of data on customers, suppliers, and markets—and struggle to do something useful with it.

Medical giant Kaiser Permanente, for example, recently announced a \$1.8 billion project to computerize patient records. Good developers know not only Oracle or one of the other major applications but also how it swaps data with others, says Glenn Hoogerwerf of VMC Consulting, whose work for companies includes software testing. That's an area that will draw more workers with liberal arts degrees. Computer science programs won't keep up with demand, anyway, and a decade from now, tech managers and analysts will better value communication skills in supporting applications. A bachelor's degree is usually required. Salaries range from a low of \$40,000 a year for a new analyst to \$86,000 for an experienced administrator. —David LaGesse

FINANCE

As the stock market goes, so go banking and brokerage jobs, which explains why Merrill Lynch has 25 percent fewer employees today than it had two years ago. But happily for job seekers, Wall Street is just one part of the broader finance sector. As a result of continuing worries about the economy, long-term interest rates remain at multidecade lows. That means "mortgage banking and anything having to do with residential home construction are still very hot areas of the [job] market," says John Challenger, CEO of the outplacement firm Challenger, Gray & Christmas. Elsewhere, the do-it-yourself trading craze of the late '90s has turned into stock market rage, creating opportunities for financial planners as burned investors and 401(k) participants seek help.

NOW HIRING: Though it had already added more than 110,000 jobs over the past two years, the mortgage banking industry is still desperately seeking loan originators. True, interest rates are expected to climb in the latter half of this year. And if and when that happens, refinancing activity is likely to slow. But the Mortgage Bankers Association of America still anticipates handling \$1.8 trillion in new and refinanced mortgages in 2003, which would be the third-best year ever. In an effort to capture more "purchase" business, as opposed to refinancing, Countrywide Financial hopes to hire 800 to 1,000 home-loan sales consultants immediately, adding to its 2,500-member sales force. "Frankly, as we fill those positions and continue to make inroads in the purchase market, we'll likely add more," says Leora Goren, Countrywide's managing director of human resources. According to a survey by Aon Consulting, commission-only loan originators earned between \$50,900 and \$177,400 in

2001, with a median annual income of \$105,200.

FUTURE PROSPECTS: A majority of Americans think financial planning is more important today than it was at the start of the bear market. No wonder MetLife Financial Services plans to hire about 300 financial planners this year, bringing its total to about 1,300. The brokerage Edward Jones says it will train nearly 200 new investment representatives a month for the foreseeable future. This trend is likely to continue through the decade as the first wave of baby boomers starts to retire in an ever changing—and confusing—landscape of tax laws and retirement rules. Financial planners are required to seek specific licenses if they want to sell mutual funds, individual securities, and life insurance. Some also obtain a "certified financial planner" designation. A survey by the College for Financial Planning last year found that an average planner's annual income before taxes jumped from \$60,000 to \$100,000 after earning a CFP mark.

—Paul J. Lim

